

ST AUSTELL TOWN COUNCIL



Co-Option Procedure

Background

St Austell Town Council has approved the following co-option procedure.

Overall Process

Stage 1 – Advertising and Promoting

The vacancy should be advertised locally and interested parties invited to complete a short application form outlining why they would like to be a Town Councillor and what they can bring to the role.

Stage 2 – Processing and Invitation

The completed application forms are processed and applicants are invited to the next Full Council meeting to perform a presentation to members.

Stage 3 – Presentation and Logistics

The vacancy is placed as the last item on the Agenda of the Full Council meeting (before Exempt business). This serves two purposes, it prevents the newly co-opted member from trying to vote during the meeting (before they have signed their acceptance of Office and completed their register of interests) and also allows the applicant to see how a meeting operates and gives them the opportunity to change their mind if they feel the role is not for them.

When members get to the item on the agenda, the following process should be followed with no significant changes.

Stage 4 – Selection Process

Once reaching the item on the agenda

A. Invite applicants to speak for up to 3 minutes on who they are and why they would like to be a councillor.

B. Proceed to the co-option process (written ballot)

- I. Each member has voting paper and he/she then votes for his preferred candidate.
- II. The ballots are counted by the Town Clerk, (who may be assisted by another officer) and the Town Clerk will announce the number of votes for each candidate after each round. Details of how each Member voted will not be announced.
- III. To be co-opted, a candidate needs to receive an overall majority. If there are three or more candidates it may be necessary to repeat the ballot, losing the candidate(s) who received the lowest number of votes until there is a clear majority.
- IV. If the result is tied, the process should be repeated at least once more before the Mayor exercises his/her casting vote.

NOTE: The qualifications for being a councillor are clearly defined in the Local Government Act 1972. Provided that a candidate meets these requirements the council should consider any application on its merits.

****IMPORTANT INFORMATION****

Qualification criteria (as at June 2016)

The Town Council may co-opt as a member any person who is legally qualified to hold such office, and who is willing to serve, provided he or she is a Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of the Republic of Ireland or relevant citizen of the European Union and satisfies at least one of the following qualification categories:

- (a) is registered as a local government elector for the parish of St Austell;
- (b) has during the whole of the preceding twelve months occupied as owner or tenant, any land or premises in the parish of St Austell;
- (c) his/her principal or only place of work during the preceding twelve months has been in the parish of St Austell;
- (d) had during the whole of the preceding twelve months resided in the parish of St Austell or within 4.8 km (3 miles) thereof.

You may not be a Councillor if

- (a) You are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim bankruptcy restrictions order or a debt relief restrictions order or interim debt relief restriction order under the Insolvency Act 1986;
- (b) Has within five years been convicted of any offence and has had passed on him/her a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of not less than three months without the option of a fine.